

# SPARK GAP MARC

## New Year Greet Indiana Hams Major Storm Creates Emergency

Ten inches of blowing snow and freezing rain put all of Indiana into a state of emergency during the New Years weekend. By early Saturday morning most people were forced to stay home as more and more Hoosier counties continued to declare this a snow emergency. Roads, airports and shopping malls were closed.

Many people are saying this winter storm was the worst since the great blizzard of January 25, 1978. Twenty years ago, all of central Indiana was shut down for nearly a week. It took local heavy machinery contractors and National Guardsmen in half/tracks to help clear the roads. People were snow bound for three days or more.

As in 1978, local hospitals declared a need for drivers with four wheel drive vehicles to help transport dialysis patients to and from local hospitals. Many central Indiana Amateur Radio operators met that need not only with cars but with communications during the first trying hours. Indiana State RACES coordinator, **Dave Crockett-WA9ZCE**, said weather and road reports were updated using HF radio. Most of the affected mid-western states found the Mid-Cars net an efficient way to share vital road and weather information. As one ham radio operator put it, "It's nice to know that Amateur Radio can still get through when your local world comes to a sliding halt." - **W8ISH**

## Club Members Mourn Loss

### Express Sympathy to JR Osborne, KB9HSE

JR's wife, Kay Osborne, passed away on Thursday, January 7<sup>th</sup>. Friends and family members gathered at the Forest Lawn Memory Gardens for a small private ceremony on Saturday morning.

Their marriage, after a fast two-week courtship, lasted for over 57 years. Kay was a very active participant with JR in local ham activities. It was always a joy to sit down to a bowl of her famous five-hour stew at our club field day! Her friendship with club members will be missed very much!

## Club Meeting

Saturday, January 16 at the EOC beginning at 8:00 AM  
Guests Welcome!

Our January club meeting will be a general chat and "get acquainted" session.

## The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club

### Membership

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club is based in Franklin, Indiana. Membership is open to all amateur radio operators and other interested persons.

Club meetings are conducted on the third Saturday of each month in the training room of the Johnson County Emergency Operations Center at 1100 Hospital Road in Franklin, IN.

Membership dues are \$18.00 per year for full members. Other types of membership are available.

Amateur Radio Operator License testing is offered following the club meeting during the months of March through November.

The club maintains an open repeater on the 2-meter band at 146.835 MHz. Each full member has access to the repeater and autopatch.

Membership dues payment and change of address should be mailed to the club treasurer at the address listed below.

### Newsletter

The Spark Gap is the monthly club newsletter. Articles and information that would be of interest to the club members are welcome. Information may be submitted by E-mail or by mailing to the club address listed below.

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### Active Committees

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(KB9LOT)

JR Osborne  
(KB9HSE)

Dave Wendt  
(KA9OOH)

**Technical**  
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(N9QBO)  
Charlie Sears  
(N9MEW)  
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JR Osborne  
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Larry Turner  
(KB9PWN)

Al Soltis  
(WA9ZET)

**Activities**  
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(W8ISH)

Bob LaGrange  
(N9SIU)

Other

Appointments

Pending

**Membership**  
Larry Turner  
(KB9PWN)

Bill Goodall  
(K9DBY)

Other

Appointments

Pending



**MARC, PO Box 836, Franklin, IN 46131**

A SPECIAL SERVICE CLUB OF THE ARRL



January 1999

# Are You A HAMHEAD?

Frederick R. Vobbe, W8H DU

In our wonderful hobby of amateur radio, there are those among us who are "hamheads". The term was derived in a 1992 talk I gave to a meeting of amateur radio operators on how to improve their image in the public. The first question you might have is what is a Hamhead? A fair question. For those of you that like the dictionary version, here is a quick synopsis.

**Hamhead** - (n)HAM'-head. An amateur radio operator, who by their actions indicates a dysfunctional character. The person often criticizes, belittles, cheats, or impugns others in order to built up his own character. (Also see Boob, Twit, Nitwit, and Lamer. Some rare editions of Webster's Dictionary, revision 10-4, show a picture next to the word "LID".)

I have compiled a list of the traits and characteristics that you can use to spot this very common creature. However, before heading out into the wild with this list in hand, spend a few minutes in front of a mirror to determine if there could be a "hamhead" within immediate viewing distance!

Use this checklist to confirm that you have indeed located a "hamhead":

- While browsing at the local hamfest, you overhear someone comment that they only have \$15.00 dollars left to spend. You then observe this individual examining a TS-820 on a vendor's table. The unit is in mint condition. He inquires as to the asking price. The vendor at the table, with a friendly smile, replies, "\$250.00". Although the unit is in pristine condition, the "hamhead" asks, "Does it work?" The seller says, "sure", and proceeds to prove that it makes full power into a Bird 43. Mr. "hamhead" says, "Tell you what, I'll give you \$100.00 just to take it off your hands." The seller politely declines. Even though the "hamhead" had no intention of buying the unit, as he turns to walk away you hear him say to a total stranger, "I don't know why people sell such junk at these places!"
- On one of the local repeaters ol' Loud Mouth Larry The LID breaks into the conversation and starts bragging about how he made a 2-meter antenna out of a coat hanger that works better than your \$79.95 Diamond Dual Band antenna. After his 2-minute speech a "hamhead" will tell Larry how much of a jackass he is, how he doesn't know what he's talking about, and how he should clean up his act when on the repeater. A "hamhead" enjoys over-the-air confrontation!
- The "hamhead" has offered to assist in a local civic function. As a member of the club he wears the club hat, but he also wear a soiled T-shirt and a pair of pants with a loose belt so that the weight of any HT will drag his pants down far enough to display 8 inches worth of butt crack.
- At a civic function the "hamhead" is identified as an amateur radio operator. A gentleman and his daughter ask him about classes for his daughter so she can get her license. He loudly proceeds to tell the man and his daughter, "(laughing) I don't think girls can be hams. They would have to learn code." A "hamhead" is always sure of his superiority.
- You hear the "hamhead" on a local repeater. After every transmission he says, "Yeah QSL", or "Roger That", then proceeds with his conversation. He loves to use slang to demonstrate his in-depth knowledge of the hobby.
- While on a repeater, of which the "hamhead" is not a member, he hears him someone use the autopatch. When the call is completed, he asks for the patch code. His request is denied because it's a private repeater. He then launches into a long dissertation about how the public airwaves are for everyone and that he doesn't think it's right to oppress his 1st Amendment Rights to use the patch.

(Continued Next Page)

## Are You A Hamhead (Continued)

- A "hamheads" view on selling used equipment: If he is selling its worth about 95-cents on the dollar, but if he is buying some guys equipment it's worth 15-cents on the dollar.
- A "hamhead" is on HF when he copies a station in CW that is obviously a new ham. The sending is rough, but it's easy to make out every word. He's sending CQ and looking for a contact. A "hamhead" will answer at a slightly higher CW rate and tell him that he has a lot of work to do on his sending, and that only LIDS send like he does. A "hamhead" has a general dislike of new hams.
- A "hamhead" finds an ad in QST, or CQ, for a company that sells QSL cards. He requests free samples. One sample card is a beautiful one with a scene of a lake and an operator's call sign. He immediately puts it on his wall and claims to have worked the operator. He has no problem taking credit for deed not done! (Include scoring on contests).
- While on the radio, (80-meters, 2-meters, etc.), a fellow ham tells a dirty joke on the air. A "hamhead" will then tell one just as dirty or better, and top him! After all, it is important to have the best joke. He feels the need to be number one no matter what the conversation.
- Someone on the repeater is talking and times out the repeater. After the carrier comes back the "hamhead" makes a big deal about it, and announce to the world that the offender now holds the "Turkey Out Award". He takes pride in pointing out errors made by others. He will also heatedly defend himself should his actions be questioned.
- A "hamhead" has joined a local club which happens to have a repeater with an autopatch. The reason he joined was so he could use the repeater instead of a cellular phone. He refuses to participate in any way with club projects and always complains about every aspect of the club operations.

Should you spot an amateur radio operator who meets one condition detailed in the list, spare him the title of "hamhead". However, if he has two of more of these traits, then perhaps that title should be aptly bestowed! Remember that ham radio is a hobby! It is for fellowship, education, and service to your community. Do not use it to bolster your ego by hurting others, no matter how much you feel justified! -- Adapted from an article by **Frederick R. Vobbe, W8HDU**

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**Fred Vobbe, W8HDU**, is the Chief Engineer of WLIO television in Lima, Ohio. He is an active ham who owns several repeaters in the Lima area. He is also an accomplished author of books dealing with business, productivity, motivation, and self-help. Besides working in television, he is the owner of a studio which does voice work for radio/TV IDs, voice mail, on hold messages, corporate presentations, and books on tape. He publishes a magazine on cassette tape for the blind called "The DX Audio Service". His web site is at <http://www2.wcoil.com/~w8hdu>.

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## We're So Poor!

Little Johnny's parents were very, very wealthy. Realizing that they were probably spoiling their little third grader, they decided to send him to a public school. Before his first day of school, he was strongly cautioned, "Remember Johnny, you must never let anyone know that we are rich. Everyone will treat you differently if they should find out."

The first day class assignment was to write a composition about the student's family life. After much thought about his parents warning, Johnny wrote:

"I come from a very poor family. All my relatives are poor, my parents are poor, my sister is poor, our chauffeur is poor, our two maids are poor, all the cooks are poor, even our pool lifeguard is poor. We are so poor that all our friends are poor too!"

## MIR/APRS SCHOOL Club Roundup

Bob Bruninga

The annual ARRL School Club Roundup event runs from the 8th to the 13th of February 1999. The objective is to get as many SCHOOLS on the air as possible (all bands all modes). As an added benefit, the orbit path of the Space station MIR will be over the USA during school hours that week. This will make an ideal opportunity for the students to participate in satellite communications as well.

As part of the ongoing APRS/MIR/School experiments, MIREX's Dr. Larson has endorsed the maximum participation of all schools to use the MIR digipeater to exchange communications between schools during this weeklong event (do not connect to MIR). APRS style (UI) operations can handle as many as 100 stations per pass, so any school with a 2 meter FM radio, omni whip antenna and a TNC should be successful on 145.985 MHz. The APRS/MIR portion of this event is NOT A CONTEST, but an opportunity

for students and schools to learn about space communications.

Everyone is encouraged to contact a local school science teacher and schedule a time period during that week when you can help set up and/or operate a school club station. Even if you cannot transmit for some reason, the LIVE MIR downlink is always visible on the Naval Academy's MIREX web page: <http://web.usna.navy.mil/~bruninga/mirex.html>.

This page shows the results of last years APRS/MIR testing and will be updated with specific details about the Roundup event (if any). The ARRL School Club Roundup contest is described on page 92 of *QST* (January 1999) or see <http://www.arrl.org/contests>. This event offers an excellent opportunity to generate publicity about the many facets of Amateur Radio operations. --WB4APR

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## HAM HELPS NAB ROAD-RAGE SUSPECT

A California ham was instrumental in helping police to nab an angry motorist who had seriously injured another motorist after being cut off on the freeway in mid-December.

According to an account in *The Orange County Register*, the angry driver followed the other driver for miles "before confronting him on a busy city street, shoving him under an accelerating big rig, and kicking him even after he had been run over." The account says that the angry driver and his two co-workers drove off. But they were caught later in the morning when Ed Greany, KB6DOL, of Corona, heard a broadcast description of the

vehicle and then saw the men pass by. He notified police via ham radio, and they arrested Richard Snyder, 28 and two others on suspicion of attempted murder.

The newspaper said Snyder had a string of previous convictions, and his license had been suspended. The injured motorist was reported in serious condition.

According to the FCC database, the Greany household includes three hams: **Roberta Greany, KC6AEP**, and **Michael Greany, KE6RDT**. All are ARRL members.-thanks to **Charlie Clifford Jr., W6QMY**

Reprinted from the *ARRL Letter* published by the ARRL.

"He that falls in love with himself will have no rivals." – Ben Franklin
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## Desense Getting You Down?

**Desense** is a reduction in receiver sensitivity caused by noise or RF that overloads the receiver front end. Therefore, a signal other than the one we wish to receive is so strong that it overloads the receiver and makes the receiver relatively insensitive to the signal we wish to receive. The result may be that we hear nothing; or, we may hear the desired signal at a reduced volume level; or, we could even hear an undesired signal.

In emergency communications the problem of desense is often created by strong transmitters belonging to the agencies we are sent to assist, such as police and fire. Desense can also be caused by having two amateur stations at the same site. For instance, one station may be controlling a local net and a second station may be using a different frequency to transfer information to the EOC (Emergency Operations Center).

There is no one cause, or one solution to desense problems. The same station setup can cause desense one day and not the next day just because of fluctuation in propagation and weather. The amount of water in the ground (or in the air) can affect the quality of the antenna's grounding system, which affects the strength of the transmitted signal.

**The goal in solving desense problems** is to keep the unwanted RF from reaching the radio's receiver. Following are several approaches to minimizing interference. A combination of approaches often needs to be used for best results.

- Antenna location - vertical separation of antennas is often more effective than horizontal separation.
- Keep transmitter power as low as possible - to reduce interference to other stations.
- Use the best quality of coax that is practical for the installation.
- Decouple the antenna from the transmission line. Keep RF from the antenna from getting back into the coax. This can be accomplished by routing the coax through the nulls of the antenna pattern.
- The design of the radio's receive section affects how sensitive the radio is to desense. Unfortunately, there are no statistics to tell which radios have more problems.
- Separation in frequency. When at a site with two amateur stations, the two stations should be as far apart in frequency as possible. For example, have one station on 2-meters and the other station on 70-cm. In areas where local public service frequencies are in the 150 MHz range, and often using high power, it may be most practical to change to 440 MHz. If not possible, choose frequencies in the lower part of the amateur 2-meter band. If necessary, both amateur stations could move to 440. The amateur 440 band is much larger than the amateur 2-meter band; therefore, two stations on 440 can have greater separation than two stations on 2-meters.
- Cavities and filters may be used for permanent installations, such as repeaters, but are impractical for other stations.

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Wittfield St. is the first street east of Post Road on Tenth  
St., then north on Wittfield to 1217 (RED MAILBOX)

## Membership Renewal

All membership renewal fees are  
due as of January 1, 1999.

Current membership dues:

Full Member -- \$18.00  
Associate Member -- \$10.00  
Student Member -- \$6.00

Mail payments to:

**MARC Membership**  
Vernon Gill  
PO Box 836  
Franklin, IN 46131

# Mid-State Amateur Radio Club

## Membership Renewal

Mail renewal dues to:

MARC  
PO Box 836  
Franklin, IN 46131

Amateur Call Letters \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ St. \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

### How may we contact you?

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Celluar Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Beeper \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Family Membership Info

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Call \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Call \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Call \_\_\_\_\_

Please enter a telephone number to be used for your speed dial slot on the club repeater autopatch. This will be a number you call most often with the patch. Most members prefer this to be their home phone number. This number must be a local call (no calling charges) from the repeater site in Franklin, IN. (This number can be easily changed at a later date.)

Speed Dial Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

### Membership Rates for 1999

Full Member (Licensed Amateur Radio Operators) ----- \$18.00

(Full Membership includes all licensed Amateur Radio Operators in family)

Associate Member (Open to those with an interest in Amateur Radio) ----- \$10.00

Student Member (Persons enrolled in an educational institution) ----- \$6.00

Membership Contact: Vernon Gill, N9QBO. Phone (317) 738-4575. Email [gillv@juno.com](mailto:gillv@juno.com)